

State Accepting Public Comments on Funding for Isaac-Recovery Housing Programs in St. John the Baptist Parish

Sept. 17, 2014

BATON ROUGE - The State of Louisiana is accepting public comments on a Partial Action Plan that allocates \$19.3 million to St. John the Baptist Parish for the creation of five housing programs in response to Hurricane Isaac. This partial action plan also obligates the first \$1,083,398 of those funds so St. John the Baptist officials can begin program activities, including \$66,271 in administrative funds.

Partial Action Plan 4 allocates \$19,300,920 of the parish's total funding of \$32,674,000 to create the new housing programs, which are necessary to address unmet housing needs in the parish due to the 2012 storm. Funds for programs to address infrastructure and economic development needs will be allocated in future plans.

St. John the Baptist Parish experienced extensive damage to its housing stock as a result of Hurricane Isaac, affecting both homeowners and renters. Nearly 6,000 homes had \$61.9 million worth of damage, while 1,881 renters suffered moderate to severe damage. More than 55 percent of homeowners and 84.5 percent of renters who experienced damage were in the low- to moderate-income population.

The following programs will be established to address a myriad of housing needs within St. John the Baptist Parish:

- **Homeowner Rehabilitation** - \$11,549,820 to help homeowners rehabilitate, reconstruct and elevate their Isaac-damaged home, with \$476,316 obligated;
- **Small Rental Rehabilitation** - \$3,594,140 to owners of one- to four-unit rental properties to rehabilitate, reconstruct and elevate those properties, with \$218,815 obligated;
- **Housing Elevation** - \$2,500,000 towards a voluntary elevation program for homes located in flood-prone areas, with \$86,483 obligated;
- **Demolition and Clearance** - \$350,000 to demolish and clear properties identified by the St. John the Baptist Parish Planning and Zoning Department as uninhabitable, hazardous or otherwise unsafe storm-damaged homes, with \$91,885 obligated; and
- **Homebuyer Assistance** - \$1,306,960 to assist low- to moderate-income residents in becoming new homeowners, with \$143,628 obligated.

The programs will be administered by parish officials, with the state Office of Community Development's Disaster Recovery Unit and the Louisiana Housing Corporation providing oversight, guidance and technical assistance.

"These programs are a great use of recovery funds to address the wide range of housing needs in St. John the Baptist Parish" said Pat Forbes, executive director of the Louisiana Office of Community Development. "By investing in elevation,

demolition of blighted properties, and assisting first-time homebuyers, this plan will allow the parish to build back their housing safer, stronger and smarter."

"Implementation of these housing programs is critical to fulfill the recovery in St. John the Baptist Parish. We are excited that funding will be available to our residents to assist in restoring their homes and their lives," said Parish President Natalie Robottom.

Citizens, community leaders and elected officials can access the plan and submit comments online by visiting http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/dr/IC_ActionPlans.htm and opening "Isaac Partial Action Plan 4". A copy of the plan can be requested by calling (225) 219-9600.

The formal public comment period for Partial Action Plan 4 begins today, Sept. 17, 2014 and runs until 5 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014.

After accepting public comments, the state will submit the plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for final federal approval. Members of the public can submit comments several ways:

- Using the online form at http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/cdbg/dr/IC_ActionPlans.htm;
- Emailing them to ocd@la.gov;
- Mailing them to Disaster Recovery Unit, P.O. Box 94095, 70804-9095, Attn: Janice Lovett; or
- Faxing them to the attention of Janice Lovett at (225) 219-9605.

The Disaster Recovery Unit within the Office of Community Development is dedicated to helping Louisiana's citizens recover from hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and Isaac. As the state's central point for hurricane recovery, OCD-DRU manages the most extensive rebuilding effort in American history, working closely with local, state and federal partners to ensure that Louisiana recovers safer, stronger and smarter than before.

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